

Private Rented Sector Benefit Cap How-to Guide



This guide offers more detailed information and advice for those who may be interested in adopting or adapting the initiative in their local area.

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Title	Private Rented Sector Benefit Cap
Organisation	Glasgow City Council (Housing and Regeneration Services)
Category	Fully Validated Effective Local Practice
Poverty Impact	Mitigation and Prevention
Introduction to the Project	
<p>The Private Rented Sector Housing and Welfare Team (PRS Support Hub) works in the City of Glasgow to prevent homelessness and to address child poverty by providing a holistic support service that helps families sustain their PRS tenancies. Taking a proactive Housing Options approach, the service combines financial and housing services to ensure families who are referred to them for being at risk of losing their PRS tenancy are either able to continue their tenancy or move to a more sustainable housing option. The service is unique and provided by the Glasgow City Council in co-operation with partners.</p>	

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Initial Idea

Who had the initial idea?
Glasgow City Council, Corporate Welfare Reform Group and Pauline McGarry (Current Service Delivery Manager)
How did the idea for the project come about?
A working group in Glasgow City established to find out the impacts of the benefit cap on families living in the private rented sector at risk of homelessness if they could no longer sustain their tenancies. There was no dedicated support available for these families, and the availability of social housing for larger families was limited. The positively evaluated Housing Options approach by social housing providers inspired Glasgow City to apply the approach to support families in the private rented sector. Pauline McGarry has been involved as a key figure from the initial development stage.
Did you draw on any published reports / papers / research evidence or practice you had seen elsewhere to inform your plans? <i>If so, please add details to the box below.</i>
No
Who was involved in developing the initial idea of the project?
Glasgow City Council, Corporate Welfare Reform Group/Housing and Regeneration Services/Pauline McGarry.
Were those with lived experience of poverty involved in developing the initial idea of the project?
No
What funding was used, if any, to support the development of the initial idea of the project?
Yes – DWP/GCC joint initial temporary funding for the development.

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What in-kind resources were needed when developing the initial idea of the project?	
Facilities	N/A
Equipment	N/A
Local Knowledge	Pauline McGarry's in-depth knowledge of the city of Glasgow, and her experience of working with the housing sector in the city
Food and Drink	N/A
What, if any, barriers did you have to overcome when developing the initial idea of the project?	
None	
What, if anything, was helpful when developing the initial idea of the project?	
Pauline McGarry's intricate knowledge of the Glasgow housing sector and Housing Options approach.	
What was the timeline between the initial idea and the start of the project?	
D.K.	
Who made the decision to introduce the project?	
Introducing the project was a decision discussed in different groups, but ultimately the Glasgow City Council, the City Administration Committee, agreed to proceed with it.	

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Early Development of the Project

Did you run a pilot project or carry out a feasibility study? (if no, please skip to the next section, Q. 37)	
Yes, a pilot.	
What did you do? Please describe the pilot project or feasibility study.	
During the initial months of the pilot (which ran from 2017 to 2019) and development stage Pauline used her experience and network to carry out research on the situation in the PRS in Glasgow and proactively visited tenants in their homes with an additional member of staff after that	
How, if at all, were those with lived experience of poverty involved in the pilot of the project or feasibility study?	
The needs of the clients shaped what support the service offered during the pilot.	
What funding was used, if any, for the pilot of the project or feasibility study?	
Glasgow City Council, Corporate Welfare Reform Group with DWP funded the initial pilot.	
What in-kind resources were used for the pilot of the project or feasibility study?	
Facilities	N.A.
Equipment	N.A.
Local Knowledge	Pauline McGarry's in-depth knowledge of the city of Glasgow, and her experience of working with the housing and homelessness sector in the city
Food and Drink	N.A.
Was the pilot project or feasibility study evaluated? If yes, please provide details	
No	

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What evidence, if any, from the pilot project was used to confirm that it was working?

100% engagement rate and 95% homelessness prevention rate among other data.

Who made the decision to continue with the project beyond the pilot or feasibility study?

Glasgow City Council

How did the pilot or feasibility study inform the final design of the project?

Two welfare rights officers (in addition to other staff members) were added to the team after the pilot. This was because the lack of dedicated personnel paying attention to the families' financial support which is critical to avoiding homelessness proved a challenge during the pilot.

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Accessing the Service and Engaging with Service Users

Is there a referral process? If yes, how does the referral process work (self-referral, referred by other agencies, identified from an existing database)

Yes, other actors (public and private) can refer families to the service after they have been identified as at risk of losing their private rented sector tenancy. Parties providing referrals include for example community homeless service, community health service, social workers, addiction workers, mental health workers, etc.

How are potential clients made aware of the project?

All clients access the service through a referral-based system due to the high demand for the service.

How do you keep in touch with service users? Do your service users have a preferred method of contact?

Phone or email.

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Working with People with Lived Experience of Poverty

Are those with lived experience of poverty involved in delivering the project? *If so, please describe below.*

No

Are people with lived experience of poverty involved in managing the project or project governance? *If so, please describe below.*

No

Are people with lived experience of poverty involved in any other aspect of the project? *If so, please describe below.*

Yes, a tenant led commission was consulted on a one-off basis post-Covid and a report was produced from these consultations.

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Leadership, Governance and Partnership Working

Who is responsible for managing the project?
Pauline McGarry
Is this the only responsibility of the person managing the project? <i>If not please describe the manager's wider roles and responsibilities.</i>
Yes
Is there a Project Steering Group? <i>If yes, who is involved in this and how does it work.</i>
No
If there is no Steering Group, what governance arrangements are in place to review strategy and performance?
Governance for the service is under Housing Strategy who review the PRS support Hub.

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Links to Wider Policies, Strategies and Statutory Requirements

Is the project part of a wider anti-poverty strategy? <i>If so, please give details.</i>
Yes, multiple anti-poverty and housing strategies.
Is the project part of any other strategy? <i>If so, please give details.</i>
No
Is the project delivering a service that is a statutory commitment. <i>If so, please give details.</i>
No

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Funding

Who funds the project? <i>Please give details.</i>
A variety of organisations; majority funders are HSCP, Housing and Regeneration Services, and NRS.
How is the project funded?
Cocktail funding (funding from multiple different streams) that is renewed yearly.
How much does the project cost?
Information not available to the public.
Is future funding based on pre-agreed outcomes or outputs being delivered?
No

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Staffing and Resources

Which partners are involved in delivering the project (local authorities, organisations, community groups, etc.)?	
Glasgow City Council deliver the project with support from external partners and third sector organisations. (The private landlord registration unit, HMO unit, PRS repairs team, housing investment team, community homeless service, community health service, social workers, addiction workers, mental health workers, etc.)	
Which paid staff are involved in delivering the project?	
The PRS Support Hub staff (3 housing and welfare officers, 2 welfare rights officers, senior property officer and a project support officer) including Pauline as the service delivery manager. Support provided from other teams within GCC, NRS, Housing and Regeneration Services.	
Are volunteers involved in delivering the project? <i>Please describe their role and their contribution.</i>	
No volunteers are involved.	
What in-kind resources do you need to deliver your project?	
Facilities	Office space.
Equipment	Mobile phones and laptops.
Local Knowledge	Experience and knowledge of housing in Glasgow including the private rented sector. Knowledge of the welfare and benefits system and legislation relating to the relevant property standard.
Food and Drink	N.A.
For each of the in-kind resources listed above, who provides it?	
Facilities	Council.
Equipment	Council.



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Local Knowledge	Hired staff and consulted groups.
Food and Drink	N.A.
Did you have to buy or develop new IT systems, software (databases, apps) or technology to deliver your project? <i>Please describe below.</i>	
No	
Was additional staff training required to deliver your project? <i>If so, please describe.</i>	
Yes, Pauline delivered training on the service to complement the already existing knowledge of the hired staff in the Hub.	

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Monitoring and Evaluation

What information, if any, do you collect about your project?	
Number of users	Yes
Profile of users	Yes
Experience of users	Yes
Anything else	4 groups of outcomes on which the service collects data: the overarching housing outcome, financial outcome, health and personal needs outcome, and property outcome.
How often is data collected? Who collects the data?	
Data collection is on-going. The data is stored securely on GCC's IT systems and protected according to GDPR for which the users' consent is asked.	
Do you have baseline data on what things were like before the start of the project or before users started the project? <i>Please describe the type of baseline data that you have.</i>	
No larger scale baseline data as majority that was collected on the PRS before the start of the service was property-centric instead of focusing on people.	
Do you produce an annual report? <i>Please provide details of what this includes.</i>	
Yes. The report includes data from the highlight reports produced every month, such as the homelessness <u>prevention</u> rate, tenancy sustenance rate, and the level of income generated for the family (excluding housing costs). The report also details barriers and challenges faced by the service users.	
In what ways, if at all, do you use the data that you collect to adapt the service that you provide?	
To adapt to the demand for the service and manage the resources available to the hub. To identify wider needs of service users.	



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Have you employed an external organisation to formally evaluate your project? *If yes, please provide details.*

No

Do you intend to employ an external organisation to evaluate the service that you provide in the future? *If yes, please provide details.*

No.

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Reach and Impact

What difference has the project made?
The PRS Hub has provided a unique, person-centred holistic service in a sector previously not addressed, and achieved extremely high tenancy retention rates and homelessness prevention rates. In addition to this the service has been able to generate additional income (excluding housing costs) for the families referred to them having a long-term impact for the family and participating in the prevention of homelessness and mitigation of poverty in the city.
How do you know this? What evidence demonstrates impact (metrics, interviews, feedback)?
Feedback from the service users, data collected (for example the high homelessness prevention rate with those who engage).
To what extent have the aims of the project been achieved?
To a high extent.
How, if at all, have conditions changed since the project was introduced?
The cost-of-living crisis and Covid-19 pandemic changed the PRS with the temporary ban on evictions confusing tenants about their rights. The demand for the service has increased post pandemic, and more people are referred to the service with an eviction notice.
If yes, has the project had the capacity to meet these changing conditions and demand? <i>Please describe and explain below.</i>
The Hub has adjusted to the changed conditions by going from delivering the support in the clients' homes before the pandemic to only working over the phone during lockdown. Currently they are delivering a mix of in-person and over-the-phone service to meet the increased demand post-lockdown.
Has the project had any unexpected or unintended outcomes? <i>If so, whether positive or negative, please describe.</i>

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Positive property outcomes, particularly in terms of fire safety. Keeping on top of properties meeting safety standards. Landlords asking for advice on their duties and how to support their tenants.

In your opinion, is the project having an impact on tackling child poverty? If so, please describe in what ways.

Yes. The holistic approach of the service paying attention to health and personal needs as well as financial aspects of the family being referred reduces and mitigates child poverty. Maximising people's incomes is a priority for the service.

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Learning from Experience

What is working well?
Collaboration with partners is the key to success. Partnership with the community homeless service provides a crucial point of contact for those who do not see other avenues outside of homeless to sustaining their tenancies.
What, if anything, is working less well?
N.A.
What are the key learning points that you'd like to share with other practitioners? For example, is there anything that you would do differently?
Establishing good partnerships is important and key to providing access to the service to the people who need it.
What plans do you have to develop or expand the project in the future?
Not currently possible due to limited resources and funding. Hiring more housing welfare officers is the hope if additional funding is secured.
How easily do you think your project could be replicated in another setting?
Relatively easily.

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